

## On the tragic anti-Semitic murders at the Tree of Life Synagogue three years ago today

*Excerpts of remarks by  
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We pause collectively to remember the anti-Semitic murders at Tree of Life Synagogue three years ago today.

It is important that we do so because “Never Forget” cannot become simply one slogan among many others.

We must actively remember – which is something that we are doing today. And we must act.

Sadly, in our nation as a whole, amid a generational shift, there increasingly seems to be a lack of awareness of how ugly anti-Semitism is – a reminder that with each new generation, lessons need to be taught.

Decades ago I got to know Natan Sharansky, who would go on to testify at a number of hearings I chaired.

He repeatedly called attention to the increasing anti-Semitism that was then on the rise, particularly in Europe, as the generation which had first-hand knowledge of the Holocaust was being replaced by a new generational cohort who lacked that awareness.

At a 2004 hearing I chaired, [Sharansky testified](#) that “...there are two important components in this new phenomenon of anti-Semitism. One is using an anti-Israeli campaign for strengthening anti-Semitism and the other is classical anti-Semitism—the old, deep, primitive prejudices against Jews...”

“...It is important to define the line between legitimate criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism. Israel is a strong democracy, and the only democracy in the Middle East, and it is built on the criticism from within and without. Of course, we support all forms of legitimate criticism, but it is very important to see the difference, draw the line between this legitimate criticism and anti-Semitism.”

Sharansky, proposed a simple formula for exposing anti-Semitism masquerading as mere policy differences with the nation of Israel and called it the 3D test: demonization, double standard and delegitimization.

All three manifestations of anti-Semitic hate are on full display today.

Today, unparalleled since the dark days of the Second World War, Jewish communities around the world are facing violent attacks against synagogues, schools, cultural sites, cemeteries and individuals.

What happened at Tree of Life is a reminder that anti-Semitism is an ugly reality that won't go away by ignoring or wishing it away. It must be defeated.

Anti-Semitism in the United States—which had already been worsening according to the FBI, more than 60% of all anti-religious hate crimes in the U.S. are directed against Jews—is now exploding.

If our fight is to succeed, we need government officials at all levels to denounce, without hesitation or delay, anti-Semitic acts wherever and whenever they occur. No exceptions. The purveyors of hate never take a holiday or grow weary, nor should we.